

illusioned him of the romance with which Cooper in his "Leather Stocking Tales" had invested the figure of the red man.

Yet in spite of their later degradation, these Alabama Indians had not been without the marks of a social and economic existence that seemed to lift them above the status of simple barbarism. A recent writer on the iron and coal industries of this section of Alabama says:—

There is a tradition to the effect that a tribe of Indians called the Ullabees, corrupted by the whites into Hilla-bees, occupied the mountainous district along Talladega Creek, extending into the present County of Clay, and that these Ullabees had iron arrow heads, and various rude implements made of iron when the first settlers penetrated the wilds, and traded with the Ullabee clan of the Muscogee Indians.

Much of the land in this Creek country belonged to the United States government, and was now put on the market. The Federal Land Office was at Mardisville, near the centre of Talladega County. The several government tracts had been surveyed and laid off into sections of six hundred and forty acres each, and these into subdivisions of forty acres each. This "forty acres" subdivision is supposed to have been the origin of the limitation upon the expectancy of the Southern negro ex-slave in the matter of land in the period immediately succeeding the collapse of the Southern Confederacy. The concomitant mule was a suggestion original to the reconstruction period.

Under the Federal statutes, this public land was subject to entry, with restrictions, on the payment

of a fixed price, at the Mardisville Land Office. The government, however, would accept no money in payment but gold and silver. The paper money of the period was without provision for redemption, and was greatly depreciated. Much extortion was practised by the money changers in the conversion of "shinplasters" into specie, since speculation in lands had become long since in the southwest a species of mania. The strange passion for town-building under conditions known as "boom," which has characterized so many sections and localities of the North American continent at various periods in its history, had twenty years earlier seized upon the then Territory of Alabama.

"Now that the heart of the river basin from the Tennessee Valley to the Florida line was open to white settlement," writes the historian, "immigration came by leaps and bounds. The Whitney gin made cotton-raising the money-making industry, and planters took up much of the Black Belt. Town-making became the rage. Not only was Blakely founded across the delta as a rival to Mobile, and even St. Stephens had neighbors, but Wetumpka, Montgomery, Selma, and Tuscaloosa were laid out, besides others which were to live only on paper. The steamboat had come on the Mississippi. It was clear that in a short time it must solve the transportation question, and make of the river basin an agricultural commonwealth. The old times when the port which looked abroad was the only place of interest, had passed. Local centres were developed over the eastern half of Mississippi territory, and the commerce through Mobile vastly increased.

"The western half, with Mississippi River as its promoter, had increased even more rapidly, and in 1817 was erected into the State of Mississippi. The counties left outside became the territory of Alabama, whose legisla-

ture met at St. Stephens as the first capitol; but, in two years the sentiment steadily grew that this new territory also was ripe for statehood."

The main public thoroughfare of the county of Talladega passed in front of the door of the Curry homestead at Kelly's Springs, which was situated six miles east of Talladega, and eleven miles north-east of Mardisville. "Every hour in the day and often through the night," writes Curry, "a stream of people would be passing to and from the land office. All traveled on horseback, as the country was new, very sparsely settled, and the roads were few and very bad. Every traveler had his saddlebags for carrying 'the specie' as it was called. Hundreds of these land-buyers stopped with my father. There were no inns or public houses; and unpleasant as it was to entertain them, it was a necessity. The immigration for a few years to this part of Alabama was very large. The settlers were mainly from Tennessee, Georgia and South Carolina, but not a few were from North Carolina and Virginia, with a 'sprinkling' from New England."

The early settlers of Alabama came from many directions. The valley of the Tennessee River, in Northern Alabama, was settled for the most part by Tennesseans, and through Tennessee, by Virginians. The Georgians came down the Coosa Valley, and back of them the North and South Carolinians filled the central section; while the southern part of the state was populated by settlers from every direction. From the Northern States came several thousand New England business men.

One colony, consisting of French exiles, who had followed the fortunes of Napoleon until his downfall, founded

on the Tombigbie River, a town which they called Demopolis, in what later became Marengo County.

This heterogeneous people had, as well might be expected, the characteristic virtues and vices of frontier settlers. They exercised a ready and generous hospitality, a neighborly kindness, and an unflinching and invincible self-reliance. They encouraged the propagation of religion; and Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians established their churches and flourished in greater or less degree from the beginning of the earlier settlements. The eccentric Lorenzo Dow, whose introduction of camp-meetings into England had resulted in primitive Methodism there, and who is said to have preached to more persons than any man of his time, had been the first minister on the Tombigbie River as far back as 1803. The Alabama settlers brought with them, too, the knowledge and practice of political and civil institutions; but withal, they had the recklessness of the frontiersman, and were quick to resort to weapons to avenge wrong or insult.

A recent historian has declared that

the Virginians were the least practical of the settlers and the Georgians the most so, while the North Carolinians were a happy medium. The Georgians were noted for their stubborn persistence, and they usually succeeded in whatever they undertook. The Virginians liked a leisurely planter's life with abundant social pleasures. The Tennesseans and Kentuckians were hardly distinguishable from the Virginians and Carolinians, to whom they were closely related. The northern professional and business men exercised an influence more than commensurate with their numbers, being, in a way, picked men. Neither the Georgians nor the Virginians were

assertive office-seekers, but the Carolinians liked to hold office, and the politics of the state were moulded by the South Carolinians and Georgians. All were naturally inclined to favor a weak federal administration and a strong state government with much liberty of the individual. The theories of Patrick Henry, Jefferson, and Calhoun, not those of Washington and John Marshall, formed the political creed of the Alabamians.

At the time of William Curry's settlement in Talladega, cotton was the chief agricultural product. The town of Wetumpka, seventy miles to the south on the Coosa River, was the market town for the cotton crops of the section. Wagons drawn by oxen or mules or horses carried down the cotton over rough roads, and fetched back sugar, salt, coffee, iron, rope and bagging, or merchandise for the stores. Curry, as a boy, used to go with his father's wagons occasionally, and would sometimes be thus absent from home for eight or ten days at a time. There was so much hauling over them, that the few roads, poor always at their best, would periodically become almost impassable. Some wag is said to have posted up, in these early days, a bulletin by the side of one of the Alabama quagmire roads, to the following effect:—

This road is not passable,—
Not even jackassable.
So when you travel,
Take your own gravel.

The cost of transporting the cotton crop to market interfered very largely with the profits of planting. Sometimes boats were built, and, loaded with cotton, were floated down the rivers in the freshets, as loggers in a lumber country float their logs down stream.

William Curry continued to conduct in Alabama, as he had done in Georgia, a country store as an adjunct to the raising of crops on the plantation. In a country where the monetary circulating medium, poor and depreciated as it was, was insufficient in quantity, business was conducted largely upon ledger credits. The country storekeeper sold his neighbors and customers the supplies of various kinds which his wagons brought up from Wetumpka over the bottomless roads, and "charged" them in personal accounts upon his books. As an inevitable consequence many of these accounts were never paid; and William Curry's indulgence of his debtors, during a long period of conducting the business of a country merchant, resulted in the loss to him of many thousands of dollars.

As was frequently the case, the United States Post-office was located at the country store; and young Jabez assisted his father, who was postmaster at Kelly's Springs, in handling the mails, and in conducting the business of the office with the Department at Washington. The day of uniform postal rates and postage stamps had not yet arrived. Envelopes were little known. The writer of a letter was taught, when a pupil at the "old field school," the art of folding and sealing it so as to leave proper outside space for the address, with the same assiduity as that with which he was instructed in the art of making the quill pen with which the epistle was indited. The introduction of the now universally used envelope, with its accompanying mucilage, made adhesive by the moisture of the tongue, was greatly deprecated by the letter writers of this earlier period; and it is recorded of John Randolph

of Roanoke that, upon the receipt of a letter in such a covering, he inveighed bitterly against his correspondent for "sending him his spittle." The period of the post-office in the country store at Kelly's Springs "was," writes Curry in later years, "before the days of penny postage, and letters were charged six and a quarter, twelve and a half, eighteen and three quarters, twenty-five, and thirty-seven and a half cents, according to weight or distance carried. Prepayment was not compulsory."

Preachers in Talladega in those days, records Curry, "were not too numerous." There were only three Presbyterian ministers in the county. These were Messrs. Cater, Chapman, and McAlpine, names unknown to fame, but all doubtless faithful servants and laborers in a vineyard where the harvest must have offered abundant opportunity of service and accomplishment.

"Baptists and Methodists," says Curry, "as they usually do, performed all the pioneer missionary work. I recall such Baptist ministers as Chilton, Henderson, Welch, Taliaferro, McCain, Archer, Pace, Collins, Wood. Camp-meetings were held every year."

Mr. Finn, the Irish teacher at "Double Branches," back in Georgia, had been invited by the elder Curry to adventure his fortunes in the new country; and the invitation had been eagerly accepted by the sprightly schoolmaster. Finn doubtless accompanied the family in their migration across country; for it appears that on the day following the arrival of the Currys at Kelly's Springs, the business of educating the younger members of the family was promptly taken up. Mr. Finn opened his school,

and the children renewed their studies, their number being gradually augmented by the advent of the children of the nearest neighbors. Jabez continued his lessons in Latin, Greek, Algebra, and Geometry; and stood well in his classes.

"The school was mixed," he writes, "composed of boys and girls. All the schools I ever attended, except the one at Willington, South Carolina, were such; and I here desire to record my decided opinion and my emphatic testimony in favor of the co-education of the sexes."

This outspoken opinion of Curry's was written in the early part of the year 1876, after long consideration and mature conclusion, in a life of which the subject of education had even then filled no insignificant part; and he never wavered in his faith. His "Diary" for 1889 shows him still the champion of co-education in the discussion among the Trustees of the college in Virginia, of which he was one, in the fall and winter of that year. It was a cause whose advocacy was not always popular in southern communities; but it was characteristic of the man's courage, and of his fidelity to ideals once deliberately established, that he was always outspoken in its maintenance.

Although, as has been heretofore stated, the population of the young state was perhaps too raw, and at all events too busy to care very much about politics, there were offices to be filled and officials to be voted for; and in 1838 and 1839 young Curry heard for the first time the voice of the political candidate, literally, "upon the stump;" for the origin of the American phrase, synonymous with the more formal and dignified but no less expressive

English term, "on the hustings," arose from the custom of the frontier politician and orator addressing his audience from the convenient altitude of the new-made stump, from which had just been felled the majestic body of some great forest tree.

"Harvey W. Ellis and George W. Crabb were candidates for Congress," Curry writes, in recalling the occasion. Crabb was elected as a Whig, "and I remember that in alluding to the subject of slavery, the candidates did so with bated breath." Mere human prescience could not well imagine an economic order surviving under different labor conditions, with the blacks free and unhindered to do as they would; but the burden of ownership of human beings somehow rested on the spirit of a society naturally very kindly and devoted to freedom. It is a very dull intelligence that does not perceive the *impasse* into which these men had been led by the commercialism and the compromises of other generations. No wonder the subject was mentioned with bated breath, for tragedy or ruin seemed to guard every gateway of solution; and they felt the tenseness of the situation in their nerves if they did not dare to utter it with their tongues.

CHAPTER III

ATHENIAN DAYS

ONE of the earliest acts of the legislature of the new State of Alabama was to establish, on December 18, 1820, a State University. The act of establishment donated to the purposes of the University forty-six thousand acres of land, which had been appropriated to educational purposes in the Federal statute establishing the new government; and Tuscaloosa having been selected as the site of the University in 1827, work was commenced upon the buildings, and the institution was opened for the admission of students in 1831.

It might naturally be supposed that William Curry would have sent his sons for a college education to the University of his adopted State; but, though no college-bred man himself, his intellectual associations had in a certain sense been with the leading educational institution of the State of his old home. He had known many of its graduates; and his predilections were all in favor of Franklin College, at Athens, Georgia. Thus it was that in August, 1839, Jabez Curry, together with his brother Jackson and their stepbrother, David H. Remsen, entered Franklin College, an institution which had had its origins in 1785 in a State charter, appropriating certain lands, and authorizing a University, which was located at Athens in 1801 as "Franklin

College"; and which grew later into the present University of Georgia.

Of the reasons why this particular institution was chosen for him, and of his matriculation there, Curry, writing in after years, suggests the following:—

It would have been much better for me to have gone to the University of Alabama; but the institution had had troubles, and my father cherished an attachment for his native state. David and Jackson entered the Sophomore class. I, because of my insufficient age, was put into the Freshman class, and very properly; although on my examination I was declared capable of entering a higher class. A great mistake had been made in my previous education. Instead of studying English branches, and learning Grammar, Arithmetic and Geography, I was at an early age put to learning Latin and Greek, to the neglect of more important and elementary studies.

The journey of the boys from Kelly's Springs to Athens was made in a carriage, and occupied five days. The route, which was followed thereafter in later trips from college, home, and back again, traversed the spot where has since grown up the great and prosperous city of Atlanta.

"When I first passed there," says Curry, "there was not a house, or the hope of a village. As the meeting-point of the Georgia and Western Atlantic Railways, the town had its origin in 1841, and was called Marthasville, after a daughter of Wilson Lumpkin, the Governor. . . . As I passed to and fro . . . the city sprang up as by magic. During the War, while a soldier, I was encamped where I had several times traveled when a college boy. I have been familiar, in peace and in war, with its rapid growth."

His room at the University was No. 23 in the new college,—a fact as worthy of commemoration on the part of those who value and appreciate his great services in the cause of Southern education, as is the similar record by literature-lovers of the tiny college-dwelling-place of a great American poet, in the University of Virginia, that is lettered in bronze over the door: "*Parva domus magni poetae.*" Here, in No. 23, Curry lived and studied during three of his four formative years at Athens. Together with David Remsen, and his brother Jackson, he joined the Phi Kappa Debating Society. There was another college society for the cultivation of debate among the students; but the lads, with patriotic zeal, chose the Phi Kappa, because it had been and was the custom of most of the students from Alabama to belong to it. He records "a noble rivalry" between that society and the Demosthenean. "They met," he writes, "in their respective halls on Saturday mornings, and kept their proceedings entirely secret. The debates were conducted with much spirit. Through my college course I gave much attention to my debating society; and whatever success I have achieved as a speaker is very largely attributable to my training in this school." It is singular how the rise of new interests in a more complex day and especially the exaltation of athletic exercises have caused the forensic habit to languish and dwindle.

There can be little doubt that Curry's facility of expression as a speaker, and the power which he illustrated at an early date in his public career of holding the attention of his audiences, came from the admirable and diligent practice of the arts of the speaker in the debating society at Athens. He

writes at a later date than that of the foregoing extract from his journal a reiterated expression of his belief in the great benefit which he derived from this part of his college education.

Every student was a member of one or the other of these organizations. The competition, the rivalry, was strong but gentlemanly. Each met every Saturday morning, and questions previously selected were debated with ardor and profit, sometimes into the night. I must bear emphatic testimony to the value of these exercises upon my subsequent career. The first Greek letter society was organized while I was a student; but I must question whether these select clubs have not had a harmful influence upon the more useful literary societies.

It is interesting to observe the curriculum and methods at that time prevailing at Franklin College.

"The curriculum," he writes, "was of the old-fashioned kind; Latin, Greek and Mathematics predominating, with very little science; and the teaching was chiefly of the text-book order. Prof. C. F. McCoy, one of the best teachers I ever knew, 'kicked out of the traces,' and strove with some success to make his department of Mathematics and Mechanical Philosophy to conform to what is now universally accepted as a necessity of liberal education. English was ignored. Such text-books as Day's Mathematics, Comstock's Geology, Say's Political Economy, Hedge's Logic, Upham's Mental Science, and Paley's Moral Philosophy were used. McCoy published for his class a Calculus of his own; and a published lecture on 'Matter' created a local sensation, being regarded for its exposition of 'potency' as a long stride towards materialism. Looking back from present surroundings and the great progress of college education and all teaching (circa 1901) I am constrained to say, with undiminished loyalty for my Alma Mater, that, McCoy excepted, the President and Profes-

sors in teaching power were not up to modern standards. Nevertheless, the institution was of a solid character, the relation between Faculty and students was most pleasant, and the four years at college were among the most pleasant and profitable of a long life."

A striking feature of Curry's various written memoranda is his insistence on the value of instruction in English, whether in the elementary and secondary schools or in the college curriculum. To this theory of his he gave vigorous and successful practical form in his early teaching days in Richmond. "Dr. J. L. M. Curry, later Minister to Spain," writes Dr. John Bell Henneman of him in a paper on "English Studies in the South," published after Curry's death, "patron of letters, and lifelong devotee of educational interests, opened a course in English at Richmond College almost before the smoke of battle about the Confederate capitol had fairly cleared away." About the same time Prof. Thomas R. Price inaugurated a similar work at Randolph-Macon College; and Dr. Noah K. Davis had established a chair of English at Bethel, Kentucky, some months before that at Richmond. To all three of these pioneers in one of the greatest fields of college and university work, be accorded praise and credit.

This work of English development in the southern colleges, in the period immediately succeeding the War between the States, was a notable one; and the names of many other English teachers in the South are worthy of being placed alongside those of Curry, Price and Davis. But, after all is said, the distinction of having been the real pioneer in historical English work, not only in the southern colleges, but

throughout America, belongs to the many-sided genius of Thomas Jefferson.

"He acquired," says Dr. Henneman, "as a law-student, an enthusiasm for the study of Anglo-Saxon, and continued its advocacy as a definite part of the college curriculum, from 1779, when he was a member of the board for William and Mary, until 1825, when the wishes of a lifetime were at last realized by the opening of his pet creation, the University of Virginia. Jefferson had actually written out, seven years before; what is now a curious synopsis of an Anglo-Saxon grammar with specimen extracts for his new institution; and this was the first formal incorporation of a course in historical English in an American University, however meagre and defective a course of one or two hours a week in itself was."

Other influences than those of the curriculum and of books were making their educative effect felt upon the young college student at Athens in these significant years. Lafayette Lamar, his cousin, a youth of early poetic promise, cut down by death before fruition when a soldier in the first year of the War between the States, entered college the same day with him; and during their college career they were classmates and warm friends.

"Among my fellow-students," he wrote, after the lapse of sixty years, "I recall James D. Pope, now Professor of Law in South Carolina College; William Williams, Professor in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; T. R. Cobb, killed at Fredericksburg, the most talented young man I ever knew; Sam Hall, Judge of the Supreme Court; Ben Hill, distinguished as lawyer, statesman and orator; Judges Pottle and Bartlett; Felton, Representative in Congress; Joseph LeConte, Linton H. Stephens, and others well-known at the bar, in the pulpit and legisla-

tive councils. . . . LeConte became the most distinguished of all my fellow collegians as an author and a scientist."

Of Benjamin Harvey Hill, orator and statesman, whose political career is comparatively recent, it is scarcely more than necessary to mention here the facts that he served in the Senate of the Confederate States, and after the War was a Congressman and Senator from Georgia; and that he was one of the most conspicuous of American orators and patriots.

Long after their boyish association at Athens, Curry wrote to his old college-mate, LeConte, then at the University of California, a letter to which the following is the reply. The postscript of this communication possesses a peculiar interest, in view of the tremendous and fateful experience of San Francisco and other California cities, some twenty years later.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,

BERKELEY, California, May 30, 1887.

REV. J. L. M. CURRY,

My dear Sir:—Your letter received this morning was a great surprise and pleasure to me. I, too, have followed your career and rejoice in your success. I remember with pleasure Jabe Curry, the most boyish and yet one of the brightest of my college-mates. I remember the very active part you always took in the debates of the Phi Kappa Society, and how I envied your readiness, so strangely contrasted with my own painful shyness. I have, of course, gotten over this in a great measure;—only enough remains to make me always careful to make thorough preparation for even class lectures,—much more, public lectures.

My life has indeed been a happy one in all its relations. I have enough to satisfy my simple wants. My activity is in a field which is in the highest degree pleasant, and which

does not pall on the taste. My domestic life has been full of love to wife and children and grandchildren. I have had much to be thankful for, and I hope I am thankful.

If you have followed my writings, especially in the *Princeton Review*, you are doubtless aware of my position on the great questions of "Evolution and its relation to religious thought." I really feel very deeply on this subject. I herewith send you a little pamphlet on the subject. Perhaps most of it you have seen before, but not all. You must not draw any inference from the fact that it was published by Unitarians. I am still a Presbyterian, but I do a good deal of independent thinking of my own. I am aware that some will think that my views tend toward Pantheism; but I had no time to answer this implication. I have just written a small book on this subject. It will try to answer briefly three questions—1. What is Evolution? 2. What are the evidences of its truth? 3. What effect will it have on traditional views, and on religious thought generally? In this book I will answer the Pantheistic objection. I hope Appleton will bring it out in the autumn.

I shall be glad, very glad, to hear from you again, and to hear more about your personal concerns. For I would gladly revive my interest in one whom I admired even as a boy.

Very sincerely yours,

JOSEPH LECONTE.

P. S.—We have just received two or three first class seismographs. Wanted, an earthquake to record. They are rather scarce about here just now. If you have any to spare, send them on.

JOS. LECONTE.

Curry was in Spain when he received this letter; and LeConte did not live to see the great Californian earthquake, which equalled many of the most terrible

that have occurred in the history of the Spanish Peninsula. LeConte, who was born in Liberty County, Georgia, in 1823, died in the Yosemite Valley in 1901, nearly two years before the death of Curry. He was one of the greatest of American scientists; and while his foremost work was in the field of geology, he did much to popularize science by his contributions to the literature of many of its branches. He was a teacher and professor successively in Oglethorpe College; in his alma mater, Franklin College, where he and Curry had been classmates; in South Carolina College; and in the University of California, where he occupied the chair of geology, botany and natural history from its establishment in 1869, to the date of his death.

Linton Stephens, who became a prominent lawyer and judge in Georgia, was another of Curry's classmates at Athens. He had been left an orphan at the age of three; and it was at the cost and expense of his brother, Alexander H. Stephens, that Linton pursued his studies at Athens. After graduating, he studied law at Harvard and in the University of Virginia, and achieved distinction as a judge of the Supreme Court of the State. He also served as a colonel in the Confederate army, and died at Sparta, Georgia, in 1872. His famous brother, Alexander H. Stephens, later the Vice-President of the Confederate States, and one of the ablest vindicators of that ill-starred government in his history entitled "The War between the States," used to come occasionally to Athens to see his younger brother and protégé, Linton; and it was on the occasion of one of these visits that Curry first met him and made his acquaintance. He had then been a practising law-

yer only about four years; but was already on the high-tide of a great law practice. In 1834, he had been admitted to the bar of his native State of Georgia. It is said that in the first year of his practice he lived on six dollars a week, and made four hundred dollars from his cases that year. It was not long, however, before he owned the old family homestead at Crawfordsville, and had purchased the estate which afterwards became widely known in his possession as "Liberty Hall." Curry describes him at this period, as "a small, tallow-faced, effeminate-looking man, apparently near the grave." It was a physical appearance that characterized him to the end. The body was frail and weak, but the spirit that it encased was quenchless, while life lasted. This mighty and commanding spirit was illustrated in 1848 in a personal collision which he had at Greensboro with Judge Cone, growing out of a political discussion of the Clayton compromise measure of that year. Cone cut Stephens dangerously and desperately with a knife, saying: "Now, damn you, retract, or I'll cut your throat!" Covered with blood, and terribly wounded, Stephens answered: "Never! cut!" grasping as he spoke the keen blade of Cone's knife with a right hand that was thenceforward maimed for life. He lived to a green old age, serving his country with conspicuous ability, and unexcelled patriotism; and until the day of his death was Curry's sincere and faithful friend.

Other interesting acquaintances and friends that he made during the period of his life at Athens were the political orators who came thither in the Presidential campaign of 1840, between Martin Van

Buren and William Henry Harrison, to speak at the Saturday evening meetings which were held in the town hall at Athens. Among these he makes mention of William L. Mitchell, Hopkins Halsey, Junius Hillyer, Howell Cobb, Henry R. Jackson, and Judge Charles Dougherty.

"I heard a speech," Curry writes, "impassioned and violent, from Mr. Jackson, and Judge Dougherty pounded him into mince-meat. Mr. Jackson was afterwards *chargé-d'affaires* at Vienna, a judge in Georgia, and a general in the Confederate army. My father being a democrat, I became one also, and began this year to read the newspapers."

Jackson's fame rests not solely upon his career as politician, judge and soldier. He was a poet of unusual distinction and literary charm, and has left behind him in "the written word that remains," a more enduring claim upon posterity than in any other of his accomplishments. One of his most beautiful lyrics, that has been not infrequently attributed by ill-informed newspaper writers to "Stonewall" Jackson, whose knowledge or appreciation of poetry was probably infinitesimal, is that entitled "My Wife and Child," written when he was commanding the "Irish Jasper Greens," in the only regiment that went to the War with Mexico from Georgia:—

The tattoo beats; the lights are gone;
The camp around in slumber lies;
The night with solemn pace moves on;
The shadows thicken o'er the skies,
But sleep my weary eyes hath flown,
And sad, uneasy thoughts arise.

About this time Curry first enjoyed the pleasure of seeing himself in print. He makes record of the fact that in December, 1841, doubtless inspired with his perusal of the journals so recently begun to be read by him, he contributed some slight anonymous communication to one of the papers, which was duly published.

"When it appeared in print," he records, with charming naïvete, "I was as proud as Byron was when he awoke and found himself famous. I read the article over and over many times, and could hardly restrain my boisterous exultation. I never had been as happy. What the thing was about I don't know; but all subsequent successes have never half so elated me."

There were other experiences of these college days which kept them from being monotonous, and left their vivid images upon the plastic mind of the young student. Politics and political events were beginning to assume definite shape in his thought; and recurring to the period after a lapse of thirty-five years, he writes about Whiggery and Democracy:

General Harrison died a month after his inauguration, and Vice-president Tyler succeeded him. Mr. Clay, the great and arbitrary leader of the Whig party, tried to carry out his policy of a National Bank, a Protective Tariff, Distribution of the Proceeds of the Public Lands, &c. Congress twice passed bills establishing a Bank, and President Tyler twice vetoed them. During study hours I went to the Post-office, and learned that Tyler had sent in a second veto. As I passed through the campus, I hurrahed for Tyler; and Dr. Hall, one of the Professors, saw and heard me, and fined me one dollar. I thought then he did it because he was a Whig, and was mortified at what Tyler had done; but I see now he was clearly right.

Age brings with it conservatism and charity; and Curry's final conclusion as to the real reason of this fine does credit to his sense of kindliness. But the politics of the period were bitter, and the Whigs' wrath at what they were pleased to call the tergiversation of Tyler was very great. For a student to hurrah for any one during study hours upon the campus was very culpable. That he should hurrah for Tyler in the sight and hearing of a Whig professor was likewise very reprehensible. After the lapse of time, and upon consideration of the immutability of human nature throughout the years, who shall say what it was that really produced the atoning dollar from the pocket of the offending young collegian?

At this period of his life, too, began his acquaintance with the gentler sex. Let him narrate it:—

During the three years I had been in college, I had never visited a lady. I was the least boy in the College, hardly weighing one hundred pounds, and I was excessively modest and timid. I was "afraid" of female society. I had had no sisters, grew up unfortunately among boys, and lacked that ease and freedom and self-poise of manner and ability to converse on ordinary topics, which are such a necessary part of a boy's education. My own painful embarrassment, which has never left me, taught me a lesson; and now I urge young men, for many reasons, to visit the opposite sex. My cousin, Lafayette Lamar, and a classmate, Thomas W. White, later a prominent lawyer in Mississippi, begged me to accompany them in some of their visits. I resolved to go, and for days before the time arrived I thought about it, and it weighed on me like a nightmare. It seems ludicrous now to recall my feelings; but I have since gone into battle with far less tremor and agitation than I experienced in anticipation of a visit.

The President of the College, Dr. Alonzo Church, had some beautiful and accomplished daughters, who were great favorites. I knew them very well by sight,—saw them nearly every day,—and determined to begin with them. The appointed night came. Urging my cousin not to stay to a late hour, and to help me in the event of my failing in conversation, I “crossed the Rubicon.” The ladies, quite skilled in drawing out young men, with a kindness which I gratefully record now, so helped me that an hour passed very agreeably, and I have never been called upon to pass through just such an ordeal since.

The Rubicon once crossed, the ladies of the college town came to have the pleasure of his company not infrequently; and in consequence he was able to testify afterwards that “the last six months of my college life were by far the most pleasant of my whole four years.”

In August, 1842, Jackson Curry graduated from the college. Usually at commencement there were two days for original speeches, one for juniors rising senior, and one for the honor graduates. Eight or ten of the juniors who had the best standing in their classes were elected by the Faculty as junior orators. On this occasion Jabez Curry was one of the chosen number, and delivered a highly eulogistic address on Andrew Jackson. When he returned to college after the next winter vacation, which lasted from November 1st to January 15th, he took lodgings outside the college, in town, so as to live more comfortably, and at the same time to have a more complete control of his time. From this period, until the close of his college career at Athens, his industry and application were very great. He studied with much persistence and purpose, and averaged from twelve to

fourteen hours a day at his work. In consequence of a deficiency in mathematics, he was fearful of not being able to graduate, and it was to this branch of learning that he especially applied himself during these last college months. He was consumed with the almost morbid feeling that to fail of graduation after having filled the distinguished position of junior orator involved a deep and abiding disgrace. But, happily, the conclusion of the final examinations demonstrated him to be abreast of the requirements; and he received his diploma as a graduate in August, 1843. In the classics he had approved himself among the first. In political economy, mental philosophy, and other subjects which do not involve a serious knowledge of mathematics, he had experienced no difficulty. By intense application and judicious cultivation, he had acquired a tenacious memory, which enabled him upon occasion to recite as many as from ten to fifteen pages of a book verbatim. This capacity is not infrequently an accompaniment of the linguistic talent; but it was not in that direction alone that he prevailed, for he learned his mathematics as those do not learn it who rely solely on memory.

In the distribution of academic honors at the conclusion of his four years' term, the four leading distinctions fell, in order, to Linton Stephens, Thomas White, Jabez Curry and Lafayette Lamar. Their bestowal reversed the trite and long-standing aphorism that a boy's college-career may not be taken as a prognostic of what he will do later in life. All of these four young men, save one who died with the pathetic promise of youth unfulfilled, became distinguished men. The college lad who succeeds in

later years may sometimes fail of his college honors; but the exception proves the rule that, in some one way or other, he has made and left his mark upon the student-body, or upon the college life.

Jabez was again elected orator. He chose for his theme, the thought which very often gets close to the consciousness of the boy who stands, at his graduation, face to face with life's opening career; and is illustrated in Byron's lines, which prefaced young Curry's final oration:

No more, no more, oh, never more on me,
The freshness of the heart shall fall like dew.

"I do not remember a word of the speech," he wrote in 1876. "In delivering it, I was applauded, while speaking and at the close. The former applause was exceptional."

CHAPTER IV

HARVARD AND NEW ENGLAND INFLUENCES

WITH his graduation from college Curry faced the momentous question of what path he should next pursue. Upon his return home, the problem was discussed, during the month succeeding his departure from Athens, by his family and friends in Talladega, and was thoughtfully pondered and considered by himself.

"My father proposed to send me to Germany to continue my collegiate studies," he wrote many years later, "but, in my unwisdom, I yielded to the persuasions of relatives, and went in September, 1843, to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and entered the Dane Law School of Harvard College."

His father's proposition to send him to Germany indicated not only the broad view of life which the country planter and storekeeper entertained, and his unerring recognition of his son's unusual talents, but proves no less that planting and store-keeping had been profitable employments in William Curry's case; for in those days to educate a son in Europe was no insignificant tax upon the financial means of Southern Americans. The University of Virginia had been in successful operation for eighteen years, and thither Curry's fellow-graduate, Linton Stephens, went to pursue his studies; but many people

regarded the discipline of the "honor system" at Charlottesville as too lax for young men; and the stream of Southern youths in the direction of Harvard and Yale and Princeton, that had antedated the opening of Jefferson's seminary of learning, continued to flow North, in spite of political rancor and the fiery gospel of anti-slavery, up to the very outbreak of the War between the States.

Young Curry begun his journey northward in September of the year of his graduation from Athens. It was a memorable, and in many respects, a liberalizing journey. He went by private conveyance from his father's house, over the familiar route to Athens; and thence proceeded by rail to Augusta. It was with no light heart that he undertook and pursued his way northward. "I had no experience as a traveller," he writes, "and in those days travelling was not as easy and common as now."

It was still a period of stage coaches, and corduroy roads, and primitive wayside inns, with now and then a typical specimen of the early "snakehead railroad." Curry has left an entertaining account of these means and methods of the locomotion of that day, in an article written by him in 1901, and published by the Southern History Association, under the title of "The South in Olden Times."

In my boyish days, railways were few and short. In Alabama, in 1843, there were only two, one around Muscle Shoals, and the other between Montgomery and Franklin; and it was put down on string-pieces with flat iron bars, which torn up by wheels occasionally projected into the cars, impaling passengers on what were termed "snake-heads." In 1843, *en route* to Harvard, I travelled from Augusta to Charleston by rail, built nearly all the way on

trestle-work, and by steamer from Charleston to Wilmington. Much travel in those days was on horseback, or in hacks, or picturesque stage-coaches, which signalled their arrival in towns and villages, and notified the taverns of the number of their passengers by long tin horns, or by making more ambitious music on bugles. The stage-drivers knew every body on the road, carried packages and messages, and were sometimes the confidants of country lasses and bashful beaux. The bonifaces are often drawn in character-sketches; but the stage-driver of the olden time, a typical class, has escaped portraiture by pen and pencil. Romances of the road are unused material.

He stopped on his way North for a few hours in Augusta, Georgia, where he had once visited before he left Lincoln County.

"Being a mere lad," he records of this visit, "I remembered only two things,—a big candy store, and a steamboat that plied on the Savannah River between Augusta and Savannah. From Augusta I had to go to Charleston. The railroad was built entirely on trestle work, and not by excavation and embankment, as now. At Aiken, a little town which has since become noted as a resort for invalids, there was an inclined plane; and an engine, going down a parallel track, by means of very large ropes drew the train to the summit of the hill. The country west of Charleston was dreary enough. The swamps and cypress-trees and alligators were quite novel. At Charleston I took a steamboat for Wilmington, reaching there just at sunrise. I was not seasick. Before the lines of railroad were completed, all the travel from Alabama and Georgia to the North had to be done on this route between the cities by water. I travelled by rail from Wilmington to Weldon, and thence to Portsmouth in Virginia. The long white pines in North Carolina, and the tar, pitch and turpentine, made an impression on me. From Portsmouth I was

carried up the Chesapeake Bay by steamer to Baltimore, thence by rail to New York, stopping at a hotel on Broadway, where, to my surprise, the guests were all furnished at dinner with ice-cream! The Astor House was, I think, not then built; and where the Fifth Avenue now is, was out of town. I went through Long Island Sound by steamer to some point in Rhode Island, where I took a railroad and was carried to Boston. From Boston I went to Cambridge in an omnibus that plied regularly between the towns, and was driven by one Moss, whom the *Boston Post* proposed, on account of his thirty years' faithful services, to honor with the title of D.D.—Doctor of Drivers. At Cambridge I found my cousin, William Curry, of Perry County, Alabama, a student of law."

A very short time after his arrival, he matriculated as a student in the famous Dane Law School, which has been in its career as distinguished for the eminence of its professors as for the greatness achieved by so many of its students. It had been founded in 1829, and named for its founder, according to whose stipulation Joseph Story was elected its first professor. The year before there had been only one law student in Harvard College. In 1829, under Story, the attendance in the Dane Law School was thirty; and thenceforward its numbers steadily increased. When Curry entered it in 1843, there were about one hundred and fifty law students. Story, then a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, still continued a professor in the school; and his illustrious associate was Simon Greenleaf, author of the "Law of Evidence." Curry makes mention of Story's genial humor and cordiality, which contributed scarcely less than his great abil-

ity to his wonderful success as a teacher of law. Story, on one occasion, introduced his colleague to an audience with an inimitable wit: "Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Professor Greenleaf: The best evidence of his law is his Law of Evidence." It is related of him, too, that at some public function, he toasted Mr. Edward Everett as follows:—

Eloquence flows
Where Ever-ett goes;

to which the latter promptly replied:—

However high one may climb in the legal profession in this Commonwealth, he will always find one Story higher.

A writer in the *Green Bag*, a Boston publication of the lighter sort for lawyers, who was a contemporary of Curry's in the Law School at Harvard, writes of Story as a teacher of law:

I had not enjoyed a sight of him until, as a law student, I confronted him at his professional desk. I lost attention to that first lecture in contemplating the great jurist, and in musing upon my knowledge of what he had achieved. When he presided at the moot-courts which he had established for the *nisi prius* practice of the students, or for their views upon a stated controversy, generally patterned from some case in his circuit, Professor Story was the embodiment of geniality, and seemed as pleased with the proceedings as would be a child at blindman's buff. His constant tenet to students was "the nobility and attractiveness of the legal profession."

Of his two law-teachers in the Dane School, Curry has left this interesting minute:—

Judge Story was a genial, cheerful, cordial man, full of humor and anecdote, very fond of the boys, and told us in

his lectures charming incidents about such lawyers as Webster and Mason and William Pinkney, and Sargeant and Binney. Simon Greenleaf, a native of Maine, was chosen professor on recommendation of Judge Story. Without the affluence of learning or ornate diction of Judge Story, he was a more painstaking and accurate lawyer, with keener analysis and more logical power. He was quite popular, but stricter than his colleague, to whom he was deeply attached.

The scene, the intellectual atmosphere, the associations of instructors and companions, were all alike inspiring to the eager and impressionable mind of the young Southerner. It was the beginning of that characteristic Americanism, which grew and developed in him thenceforward as long as he lived; and which made him, while clinging tenaciously to the political concepts of the Calhoun theory of the Constitution, even after the real destruction of that theory by the event of war, as loyal to the government that had come to be based on other and adverse principles, as he had ever been to that which sought to perpetuate the Calhoun interpretation and failed.

Josiah Quincy was then President of Harvard College. Story and Greenleaf were illuminating the minds of their pupils with the splendor of their intellects and the richness of their knowledge. Anson Burlingame, Rutherford B. Hayes, Thomas J. Semmes, and many other men of subsequent distinction were among his classmates; while the New England air was vibrant with the stirring politics, the intellectual thought, and the unconventional religious ideas which characterized the Massachusetts of the period. Curry devoted himself with great industry to his law studies, and did a very

considerable amount of miscellaneous reading. The libraries teemed with all sorts of books, and to them the students of the college had general access. Macaulay stirred him as with a trumpet-note:—

“Macaulay’s Miscellanies, as they were then called,” he writes, “were published in cheap form; and I read and re-read them with increasing profit and admiration. Few books have more affected my style and thought.”

But books and lectures and law-studies were insufficient, in that keen air, to fill the measure of the young man’s developing and eager thought. He went to hear the professors in the academic schools. Longfellow had just finished “The Spanish Student,” and was discharging the duties of his professorship. Lowell was editing the *Pioneer* magazine in Boston, with Poe, Hawthorne, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Whittier and William Wetmore Story among its contributors; Jared Sparks was teaching history in Harvard, and Curry sat at his feet as at the feet of Gamaliel; while Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison and “The Liberator” were making history throughout America. In the national capitol at Washington, John Quincy Adams was pouring into the hopper of legislation the ever disappearing, but none the less fatal, “abolition petitions.” John C. Calhoun, with logical exactness and prophetic foresight, was philosophizing upon the construction of the Federal Constitution, and foretelling the doom to come. Macready and Forrest and Charlotte Cushman and the elder Booth were playing to cultivated and intellectual audiences in the theatres of Boston; and Theodore Parker and Dr. Kirk and Dr. Walker were preaching in the

churches the word of God according to the gospel of Boston. It was a period and an atmosphere worthy of the beginnings of the mental and spiritual life of a young man of such talents and ambitions as Curry's. Hawthorne, whose artist's soul was displeased by the strident clamor and obtrusive sentimentalism of the time, said that every other man one met had in his vest pocket a scheme for the reformation of the universe. It was indeed a time when New England was swept by a passion of humanitarianism and social sympathy.

Curry attended the theatres when he could, and witnessed the great reproductions of classic plays by actors and actresses, whose fame remains uneclipsed by that of any of their successors. He listened in the churches on Sundays to fervid ecclesiastical rhetoric, and to the promulgation of new and transcendental religious doctrines, with the prescient eagerness of one who was himself in later years destined to shine as a pulpit orator. He attended occasional meetings of the then despised and abhorred abolitionists, with little thought of the part that he should be called upon by his larger Americanism to play in a later attempted emancipation of the negro race from the bondage of credulity and ignorance. His career as a student in the Law School at Harvard was filled to overflowing with the awakening experiences of the place and times.

"The abolitionists," he writes of them in that day, "were a noisy and fanatical faction, with more strength in Massachusetts than in any other part of the Union, but were despised there as half-crazy and fanatical.

"Wendell Phillips, Tappan, Bowen, Garrison, and some women were the leaders," he continues. "I attended at

Concord an abolition meeting,—hired a buggy, and drove that distance to attend an anti-slavery meeting. It was held in a church, and very few were present. In 1844 the abolition sentiment took form and organization under the name of the 'Liberty Party,' and I heard James G. Birney, the candidate of the party for the Presidency, deliver an address to not more than two hundred people in Faneuil Hall. Verily, times have changed since I was a student!"

The year 1844 was one of violent and tremendous political excitement. The abolitionists meant to destroy slavery, though its destruction should mean the destruction of the Union. They were the first secessionists. "Mark!" wrote Garrison in the *Liberator*. "How stands Massachusetts at this hour in reference to the Union? Just where she ought to be—in an attitude of open hostility."

"Let the Union be accursed," said the *Liberator*. "Look at the awful compromises of the Constitution by which that instrument is saturated with the blood of the slave!"

"So much for entering into a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell!" published the *Liberator*, concerning the Federal Constitution, twelve years after Curry had departed from Harvard. "We confess that we intend to trample under foot the Constitution of this country," said Mr. Wendell Phillips at a later date; and Mr. Garrison demanded, in 1855, "a Northern Confederacy, with no Union with slave-holders."

Of Calhoun, whose devotion to the Union under the Constitution Curry had already come clearly to comprehend, and whose philosophical and logical interpretation of that instrument he never ceased, through a long life of service to his country, to ap-

prove, Von Holst, a hostile and antagonistic biographer has written:—

The charge was wholly unfounded that he was endeavoring intentionally to incense the North and the South against each other, in order to promote the purpose of his party. He spoke the simple truth, when he asserted in his speech of March 9, 1836, that "however caluminated and slandered," he had "ever been devotedly attached to the Union and the institution of the country," and that he was "anxious to perpetuate them to the latest generation." He acted under the firm conviction of an imperious duty towards the South and towards the Union, and his assertion was but too well founded that these petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia were blows on the wedge, which would ultimately break the Union asunder.

So it remains, in vindication of the truth of history, that however really the War between the States, from 1861 to 1865, was waged by the North to preserve the Union, the men in the North who desired to abolish slavery at all hazards were the first internal foes of the Union; and the Southern men, who wished to preserve the Union, in accordance with their interpretation of the Federal Constitution, placing local self government above the idea of Union, were none the less patriotic and well-based in their belief that they possessed the constitutional right to secede.

The great political storm was everywhere gathering head. The annexation of Texas, over which shone like a star the heroic and splendid story of the Alamo; the great question of slavery,—an institution which the civilized world had come at last to condemn; the tariff question, which had agitated

the Nation and the States since the States had made the Nation; the Oregon boundary line, a burning phase of the slavery question—these were the things that fevered the States, and that stirred Massachusetts, and that stirred, too. Harvard College and its intellectual youth.

Bliss it was in that dawn to be alive.

But to be young was heaven.

The Whigs nominated Clay and Frelinghuysen. The acclaim rang throughout the Union:—

Hurrah, boys! The country's risin'!

Henry Clay and Frelinghuysen!

But the country did not rise that way. "Polk, Dallas and Texas," was the antiphonal war-cry of the Democrats; and the Democrats won. But in the meantime, with persistent and unwavering and almost unnoted obstinacy, the abolitionists of the *Liberator* type, under the leadership of Birney, and Phillips and Garrison, were gathering strength and momentum.

"Prior to the Whig nominations," writes Curry of the times, "I heard Sergeant S. Prentiss of Mississippi, one of the most eloquent men in America, make a speech to a packed audience in Faneuil Hall. It was one of the most thrilling specimens of platform oratory I ever listened to; and he carried his audience at pleasure. In the same hall I heard Vice-President Richard M. Johnson, a weak but honest old man, whose claim to popular support seemed to be based on a red-jacket, and the fact (of doubtful historical authenticity), that he killed Tecumseh. Being fond of politics I used to attend many political meetings of all the parties. Among Democrats, I heard Senator Levi Woodbury, afterwards a Judge of the Supreme Court; Charles

G. Greene, editor of the *Boston Post*; George Bancroft, the historian; Orestes A. Brownson, since quite famous as editor of Brownson's *Review*. . . . I heard Daniel Webster several times. In appearance he was the most marked man I ever saw. In speaking, whether in Faneuil Hall or on Boston Common, before immense and enthusiastic assemblages, he was unimpassioned and calm. It was more than suspected that he did not regard the nomination of Mr. Clay with favor. I heard also John M. Berrien of Georgia, Miller of New Jersey, and Morse of Maine. The leading managing democrat was B. F. Hallett. Benjamin F. Butler, so famous since as 'Beast Butler,' was an active democrat. Charles Sumner was then a literary lawyer, a favorite of Judge Story; but not actively connected with politics."

In 1894, in a letter to Mr. Winthrop, he gave a further account of his recollections of Mr. Webster:—

WASHINGTON, D. C., 1736 M Street,
1 Jan., 1894.

DEAR MR. WINTHROP:—Yesterday your welcome letter of the 28th came, and I procured *Scribner*, which is not on our not too long list of periodicals, in order to read your article on Webster. It is very interesting and instructive, and the reception you speak of is cumulative in enforcement of the suggestion so frequently pressed upon you, to call in a stenographer, and give autobiographical memoranda, in more connected form than is found in numerous publications, for the delight of your wide circle of friends in Europe and America. A little article on your student life in Mr. Webster's office would be a valuable contribution to a magazine.

The reply to Hayne, for vigorous English, for felicity of illustration, for impassioned eloquence, is unsurpassed in American oratory. Of course I am not expected to concur in the general and unchangeable popular verdict in refer-

ence to constitutional interpretation, or logical conclusiveness.

In 1844 I had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Webster twice, once in Faneuil Hall, when he addressed a meeting held to ratify Mr. Clay's nomination for the Presidency; and a second time, when he presided over an immense meeting, held on Boston Common. I was a mere boy, not unfamiliar with Prentiss, Hillard, Bowden, Yancey; but I could not help wondering at the great fame of Mr. W., as an orator. The closing sentences of the *Scribner* article, taken from your Central Park address, express my estimate of and admiration for the man; but, judging from the two occasions when I heard him, his was not the eloquence that moved assemblies. Slow of utterance, deliberate in manner, measuring his words, strong and almost faultless in diction, profound in his reasoning, his influence, it seemed to me, was from matter rather than manner, from weight of thought rather than capacity to arouse emotion. His presence was more majestic, more commanding, than that of any man I ever saw, and the epithet "godlike" was better adapted. It seemed to me, an inexperienced youth, when I stood near the platform on Boston Common, that any child of ten years of age would not have hesitated instantaneously to select him from the thirty thousand as incomparably the greatest intellect. Mr. Everett I never saw nor heard. Mr. Choate I heard frequently; John Quincy Adams once, and Bancroft, Brownson, Woodbury several times.

Among other orators of the period and vicinage to whom he listened in his student days at Harvard were Dr. Edward Amasa Park, then professor of sacred rhetoric in Andover Seminary, an "exponent of the doctrines that are embodied in the Andover Creed and called the New England system of theology"; George Stillman Hillard, lawyer, author and

orator; Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison, the negro and the white abolitionist agitators; and Robert Rantoul, Jr., whose contemporary fame throughout the country as an orator of unusual and powerful eloquence, as an able and persistent antagonist of protection and centralization in the Federal government, and as an advocate of educational reforms, has in the lapse of time, save in his own section, long since become only a memory and a name.

It may be well imagined that Curry's time was full. Law studies, politics, pulpit orators, great actors, and new and inspiring associations in many directions gave him much to think of and to do. Yet with it all, he found the leisure which an industrious and busy man can always find for some other yet desirable work; and nearly every week he wrote for publication over the signature of "Ion," and sent to a paper in Tuscaloosa, letters on various subjects, but dealing largely with the subject of contemporary politics, and the actors in the great political drama, whose earlier scenes were then beginning to be first presented upon the stage of history.

Not the least among the broadening forces that were thus entering the young man's life, and shaping his character and career, was one which came finally to dominate his very being and to consecrate his highest energies. Horace Mann, and his work for education, enlisted at this time Curry's attention and interest, and thenceforward exercised upon him a strong and vital influence.

It is illustrative of Curry's breadth of view, and tolerance of adverse opinion on the part of others, that although he was even then modelling his politi-

cal thought after that of Calhoun; and although Horace Mann was conspicuous among the anti-slavery agitators in politics, the young Harvard student did not permit the prejudice of partisanship to obscure his vision of Mann's great educational ideas.

"Under a full sense of my responsibility—to my country and my God," said Mann on the floor of Congress some years later, "I deliberately say, better disunion—better a civil or a servile war,—better anything that God in his providence shall send,—than an extension of the bounds of slavery."

War came; and Curry bore arms in defence of the principles upon which he conceived the Union to have been founded, involving among others the principle of local self-government on the part of the States with reference to African slavery. Near the close of a long life, and after a generation and more spent in the service of education in the South, he paid the tribute of his faith and admiration to the elder educator of the North:—

When I was in Cambridge there occurred the celebrated controversy, since historic, between Horace Mann and the thirty-one Boston teachers. Mann's glowing periods, earnest enthusiasm and democratic ideas fired my young mind and heart; and since that time I have been an enthusiastic and consistent advocate of universal education.

The value of a great man lies in his power to raise up imitators and disciples.

Henry Bernard in the East and Curry in the South almost share with Mann the honor of having led the movement for popular education and peda-

gogic reform in this country in the nineteenth century.

"In 1847, after my return to Alabama, as a candidate for and a member of the Legislature, I spoke for free schools and voted for every proposition looking to the endowment of the State University. In 1853 and 1855 I was again a representative from Talladega County, and as a member of the Committee on Education sustained Judge Meek's bill, which became the first law on the statute book establishing public schools."

Meek's name, which is better remembered among lawyers as that of an eminent and cultivated jurist, and in the literary world as the author of "Red Eagle," an epic poem which embodies the romantic story of Weatherford, the Indian chief, is deserving of commemoration for his origination of the system of public education in Alabama in 1853, long before it had come in many other Southern States of the American Union.

Among Curry's fellows in the Dane Law School has already been mentioned Rutherford B. Hayes, who succeeded to the Presidency of the United States in 1877 under circumstances that threatened republican institutions in their consideration and solution. Of Mr. Hayes' relation and attitude towards the contest for the Presidency, and the famous Electoral Commission, he has himself made a record in his letter to Senator Sherman, dated Columbus, Ohio, 27 November, 1876:—

You feel, I am sure, as I do about this whole business. A fair election would have given us about forty electoral votes at the South,—at least that many. But we are not to allow our friends to defeat one outrage and fraud by an-

other. There must be nothing crooked on our part. Let Mr. Tilden have the place by violence, intimidation, and fraud, rather than undertake to prevent it by means that will not bear the closest scrutiny.

Curry, in the year of the Hayes-Tilden election, wrote of Mr. Hayes:—

Hayes, three or four years my senior, boarded in the same home with myself, and we were quite intimate. He was a "good fellow," studious and upright, but not specially promising. To human appearance then my prospect for the Presidency was equal to his.

The following rather naïve entry in his diary, reminiscent of the days at Harvard, is characteristic of the man of later years, who always recognized the value of personal appearance and demeanor; and who exemplified in his own person the attractiveness of dress, and the polish of the best social life:

I did not visit any ladies while I was at the Law School; but for a time I attended a dancing-school, and became quite fond of the amusement.

The sacrifice of not visiting the ladies, which had finally given him such pleasure when at Athens, is easily attributable to the seriousness of his purpose at Harvard; and it may very well be imagined of him that even from attendance upon the dancing-school ambition was not altogether absent.

He had matriculated in the Dane Law School, September 13, 1843. In February, 1845, he received his degree of Bachelor of Laws; and set his face homeward in the same month. He stopped at various places on his journey back to Alabama; and has recorded, in connection with these pauses by the way, an occasional interesting incident.

Dixon H. Lewis, who Curry says was "the heaviest man he ever saw," was then in Washington as a Senator from Alabama. He was a friend of William Curry's, and learning of young Curry's journey homeward, wrote him a letter inviting him to visit the national capitol. In response to this agreeable invitation, Curry spent a week in Washington on his way home, as the guest of Senator Lewis, and therefore under most agreeable and advantageous auspices.

"The annexation of Texas was under discussion in the Senate," he records of this visit, "and I heard a number of speeches. I remember to have heard Hannigan of Indiana, and Allen, the present (1876) Governor of Ohio. Mr. Lewis took me to see John C. Calhoun, who was then Secretary of State. A number of persons were in his room, among them 'Mike Walsh,' a 'subterranean' politician from New York, who would now be called a boss, a leader of the working men, who was afterwards elected to Congress. Mr. Calhoun was a brilliant talker, rapid, suggestive, profound. He was then in his sixty-second year. His burning eyes, prophetic face and lofty mien gave him the look of a chieftain around whom men would gladly rally. He received me very kindly, as he was very fond of the company of young men. He was giving a sketch of Mr. Van Buren, as an adroit politician, a manipulator of conventions, and unsound on the tariff question. This was my only interview with Mr. Calhoun, and I prize the recollection of it. In all my political career I was an adherent of the Calhoun school of politics. I was very familiar with his writings, and I now regard him as no whit inferior to Aristotle, Burke, Bismarck, Cavour, Gladstone, or any statesman or publicist that ever lived."

This is high praise of Calhoun coming from a man of Curry's breadth of view and large-mindedness, es-

pecially in the light of events through which he subsequently passed that shattered most of Calhoun's political ideals. But it was a deliberate judgment and an interesting testimony to the commanding influence exerted by Calhoun in this epoch of American life.

Among other noted men whom Curry met during his week's sojourn with Mr. Lewis in Congress, were George McDuffie of South Carolina, William Henry Haywood of North Carolina, and Thomas H. Benton of Missouri, all three of whom were then Senators from their respective States. He witnessed the inauguration of James K. Polk, the democrat who had been elected in an exciting campaign over his Whig competitor, Henry Clay, and the induction into office of the vice-president, George M. Dallas. He disposes of Dallas with the remark, "He wore long silvery hair and was a graceful elocutionist." The new President, a native of North Carolina and a citizen of Tennessee, in his inaugural address arrested the young man's attention with his tribute to the Constitution and the Union.

To perpetuate them, it is our sacred duty to preserve the Union. Who shall assign limits to the achievements of free minds and free hands under the protection of this glorious Union? No treason to mankind since the organization of society, would be equal in atrocity to that of him who would lift his hand to destroy it. He would overthrow the noblest structure of human wisdom which protects himself and his fellow men. He would stop the progress of free government and involve his country either in anarchy or in despotism.

This was sound doctrine to this twenty-year-old boy over whom Calhoun's compelling presence and